

Executive Summary

What is the Critical Health Indicators report?

The Critical Health Indicators report paints a compelling portrait of Michigan's health and well-being and establishes a method for monitoring improvement. It is made up of 26 indicators that directly or indirectly measure the health of Michigan residents. The data reported in this document are based on numbers provided by state and federal sources. Links to state resources have been established to assist the reader interested in more detailed information.

Critical Health Indicators are organized into two interrelated components: focused indicators and vital statistics indicators. Focused indicators can be impacted in the short-term and reflect behavior choices and health care access and quality issues. Data collected on these indicators can serve as benchmarks and measure progress toward improving the state's health.

The vital statistics indicators represent a group of outcomes that are not as easily impacted in the short term, but can provide a framework for describing the health status of the state. These indicators provide information on the leading causes of death and premature mortality. Although death is the most severe outcome of disease or injury, it represents only a fraction of the disease burden for Michigan. Nevertheless, focusing on mortality data helps to identify opportunities for interventions to improve the health of Michigan's residents, particularly where deaths are premature or preventable.

The report examines each indicator, providing 10 years of data when available. Trend data are plotted on graphs to illustrate the annual changes (positive and negative). By considering past trends, state and local health agencies can plan more appropriately for the future. The document also provides a state map for most indicators, ranking each county compared to the state, based on a three-year average rate. This graphic illustration of county ranking serves as a tool, and allows communities and local health agencies to compare their county or counties to others on selected critical health indicators.

Overall, the report supports policymaking and program planning by stressing the importance of using outcome indicators to measure health status improvement.

What does the Critical Health Indicators tell us about Michigan's health?

In general, the health of Michigan's population is improving. Many of the indicators, such as heart disease deaths, cancer deaths, infant mortality and teen pregnancy have improved over the past 10 years. Moreover, AIDS deaths and homicides have decreased dramatically in the past few years due in part to advances in treatment, prevention activities, and increased public education. There has also been significant improvement in immunizing Michigan's children, with Michigan's immunization rates now

similar to the national average. In total, Michigan has seen improvement over the past 10 years in 16 of the 23 critical health indicators for which a direction can be established.

The only trend moving in the wrong direction is in the increasing percentage of the population that is overweight. Trends continue to be stable for seven indicators, including stroke deaths, diabetes deaths, and cigarette smoking.

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